

**Washington, D.C.** – Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Congressmen Tim Ryan (OH-17) and Brian Higgins (NY-27) have introduced legislation to give federal aid and support to cities experiencing major population loss. The bill would create a new, competitive program within the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (“HUD”) targeted towards cities and metropolitan areas experiencing large-scale property vacancy and abandonment due to long-term employment and population losses. The program would make available funds to demolish abandoned properties, find innovative uses for old structures, create green space and new city planning.

“Cities like Youngstown in my district that want to pick themselves up and begin growing again need help getting started,” said Congressman Tim Ryan. “These funds and these programs will help cities become leaner and give them a chance to be competitive again in our national and global marketplace.”

“This proposal will target aid to the communities that are suffering the most at the hands of the current recession and empower them to rebuild,” said Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) “Many of our nation's once-thriving urban centers are today facing a crippling loss of population and exodus of jobs. This program can help reverse that trend and propel a comeback in these areas. We can't afford an economic recovery that leaves some cities behind.”

“Vacant homes, blight, and declining neighborhoods aren't problems unique to Western New

York, they are issues older communities are struggling with nationwide,” said Congressman Brian Higgins. “This bill would help the neediest regions in our country demolish vacant homes that breed crime and further disinvestment and develop new opportunities to breathe new life into these neighborhoods.”

“This bill is about more than land banks-- it's about comprehensive economic development. It will help communities across Ohio that have been hit by the housing crisis and economic downturn,” said Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH). “Together, we can revitalize neighborhoods and bring new economic growth.”

The bill was written in consultation with prominent think tanks such as the Northeast-Midwest Institute and National Trust for Historic Preservation as well as local neighborhood associations in cities across the country. While the Community Regeneration, Sustainability and Innovation Act provides federal funds to cities and towns, it also creates new programs and councils that would offer technical assistance grants to cities through vacant property assistance providers and assigning staff through Intergovernmental Agreements.